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Office Hours

AND OTHER SKETCHES

By Evelyn Greenleaf Sutherland



1900

Walter H. Baker & Co. Boston

IN OFFICE HOURS

And Other SKETCHES for
Vaudeville or *Private* ACTING

By

EVELYN GREENLEAF SUTHERLAND



Boston

WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

1900

IN OFFICE HOURS



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IN OFFICE HOURS

A *Comedy* SKETCH in *One* ACT

by EVELYN GREENLEAF SUTHERLAND

(Originally produced by the Students of the *Boston University School of Medicine*, April 7, 1899)

IN OFFICE HOURS CHARACTERS

DOCTOR ROGER ELIOT

MR. WOBBLEMORE

MR. HUSTLETON

MR. VAN SHEKELS

CAESAR, THE OFFICE BOY

DOCTOR SALLIE FLOYD

MRS. SKIPNIX

MRS. WOBBLEMORE

MISS GOLFE

COSTUMES MODERN

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IN OFFICE HOURS

SCENE. — *A doctor's office. The room is of very moderate size, and quite simply furnished, though with all possible suggestion of its professional uses; as an examination table, a bookcase, with heavy professional-looking volumes, a desk on which is a stethoscope, an electric lamp for throat-examinations, etc. There is also a large jar, containing unmedicated tablets. As the curtain rises, DR. ROGER ELIOT is discovered, seated at the desk, reading. He takes a cigar from his case, and reaches out for a match from the box on the desk. CAESAR is endeavoring to steal a few tablets from the jar on the desk. Several times he almost succeeds, when some chance movement of DR. ELIOT'S startles him, and he retreats. This is repeated once or twice; and then DR. ELIOT looks up.*

Dr. E. I say! Is your nest anywhere about here?
Caesar (with a jump). Sah? Nest, sah?

Dr. E. I never saw that particular combination of dodge and flutter, except where there was a nest in the neighborhood somewhere. So I inquired.

Caesar. I ain't got no nest, sah. Fo' de Lawd, sah, dat's so!

Dr. E. Then what does seem to possess you?

Caesar. Beg yo' pardon, sah — but yo' is smokin', sah!

Dr. E. And smoke is against your principles, eh?

In Office Hours

You never use tobacco, it is a filthy weed, . . . you never put it in your mouth, like little Robert Reed; that sort of thing, eh?

Caesar (dreadfully bewildered). Ya-as sah! I—I mean—no, sah! I mean—Miss Dr. Floyd will be here in a minute, and Miss Dr. Floyd have a patient,—and Miss Dr. Floyd's patient she have de nervous prospectses, sah,—an' she moughtn't—

Dr. E. (looking at his watch). Miss Dr. Floyd, eh? Yes, that's right. How time does pass in one's leisure hours—I mean one's office-hours! In four minutes this abode of Æsculapius belongs to my fellow-tenant, under this blessed Box-and-Cox arrangement of ours. And so Miss Dr. Floyd has a patient? Happy Miss Dr. Floyd! (*He goes to the closet, takes down his coat, and begins leisurely to take off his office-jacket.*)

Caesar. Ya-as, sah, Miss Dr. Floyd have a patient, and de patient have symptoms, sah!

(*Takes down coat and brushes it.*)

Dr. E. That is very interesting. Are you treating Miss Dr. Floyd's patient, also, may I ask?

Caesar. No-o, sah. But when Miss Dr. Floyd ain't come, sah, de patient done talk to me, sah, 'cos she have so many symptoms, sah.

Dr. E. Happy fellow-tenant! (*Then the door opens suddenly, and MRS. SKIPNIX enters. At sight of DR. E. she pauses, starts, peers agitatedly but unseeingly through her spectacles, takes them off, puts them in her bag, takes out another pair, and adjusts them on her nose.*)

Mrs. Skip. You—you—you ain't my doctor!

Dr. E. (hastily resuming office-jacket). I regret to

In Office Hours

say, madam, that a great many other people might say that with equal truth.

Mrs. Skip. If you ain't my doctor, what are you here for? (*Becoming wildly agitated.*) I say, what are you here for, in my doctor's office? (*To CAESAR, very suddenly and sharply.*) Why don't you call the police?

(*CAESAR, who has just stolen a handful of the tablets, startled, chokes.*)

Cæsar. Don't want no police. Dis yer's Massa Dr. Eliot, and dis is Massa Dr. Eliot's office half de time, and Miss Dr. Floyd's office de other half de time!

Dr. E. Do me the justice to add, Caesar, that this is *my* half of the time. Miss Dr. Floyd's rights do not begin for (*consults watch*) one minute and three-quarters.

Mrs. Skip. You — you — you have this office with my doctor?

Dr. E. Pardon me. That is what I *don't* do. I have this office *without* your doctor, who is due here in three-quarters of a minute. My dear madam, it is very simple. Down-town offices are not offered to the medical aspirant without money and without price. If two doctors keep hours in the same office — *different* hours, my dear madam! — *different* hours! — the money and the price are more readily forthcoming. I trust I make myself clear?

Mrs. Skip. I don't believe a word you say. You've got a hard, bad face. I believe you're my doctor's young man, and you're cruelly deceiving her; that's what I believe!

Dr. E. Your doctor's young man — well, of all

In Office Hours

the — ! I never set eyes on your doctor in the whole course of my life, and I never want to ! Of all the —

Mrs. Skip. (shrilly). I don't believe a word you say ! I don't believe a word you say ! You wait till I see my doctor, and you'll get shown up in your true colors — you see ! — you see ! (*To CAESAR.*) Show me to that room over there, where I can set an' wait for my doctor ! Don't you believe a word that man says ! Mark my words, you'd better telephone for the police !

(*She follows CAESAR out, in the opposite direction from that in which she entered.*)

Dr. E. Well, of all the — . (*Animated pantomime, suggestive of strong language.*) If that's the kind of symptoms she indulges in (*here Dr. FLOYD enters*), I should like to prescribe a shower-bath !

Dr. F. Thank you. That might be a good idea. I've tried nearly everything else.

(*DR. ELIOT turns at the sound of her voice, and, his office-jacket being off, and his coat not yet on, faces her in much confusion. He puts on office-jacket again.*)

Dr. E. I beg your pardon. There's a rip in the sleeve of this infernal thing, and it only goes on with prayer and fasting.

Dr. F. You're quite excusable. (*She begins leisurely to remove her hat, gloves, etc.*) But, if you'll excuse the suggestion, I (*as she notices that he is wildly trying to force his coat on over his office jacket*) — I think if you took your jacket off *before* you put your coat on —

Dr. E. Thank you. (*Removes jacket, and puts on*

In Office Hours

coat.) I guess I'm rattled. Caesar didn't tell me that Miss Dr. Floyd — I beg your pardon — Dr. Floyd — had two patients.

Dr. F. She hasn't. It's humiliating, but she hasn't — I'm not a patient, you know. I'm the doctor.

Dr. E. You — you are Dr. Floyd?

Dr. F. The same. At your service.

Dr. E. You Dr. Floyd, and my fellow-tenant? Well, I'll be —

Dr. F. (hastily). O, I hope not, I'm sure! Why *shouldn't* I be Dr. Floyd?

Dr. E. Why, I thought you — why, I thought all women doctors —

Dr. F. Wore short hair and queer petticoats? Evidently you're not a co-ed.

Dr. E. No. I'm a Hahnemann man.

Dr. F. Hahnemann's right enough, but it isn't a patch on B. U. S. M.*

Dr. E. I'm too knocked out to argue. (*As he is preparing to go.*) I'm sorry I didn't know you before.

Dr. F. Why?

Dr. E. O, well — we might have gone together to pick out the furniture.

Dr. F. Good idea. Save getting duplicates.

Dr. E. Yes. And then it's such jolly good fun — picking out furniture.

Dr. F. Especially on the instalment plan.

Dr. E. Yes. Well — I suppose I must be going.

* Here can be substituted the name of any college popular in the company by which the sketch is played.

In Office Hours

Dr. F. I suppose so. My one patient is likely to appear almost any time.

Dr. E. Lucky fellow-tenant, to have one patient!

Dr. F. You're worn out with too many?

Dr. E. Guess again. I'm worn out waiting for my first one.

Dr. F. Why, haven't you —

Dr. E. Nary.

Dr. F. Then how do you —

Dr. E. Do I pay my half of our rent? O, cheer up. I have an allowance from my uncle.

Dr. F. Lucky fellow-tenant!

Dr. E. Don't deceive yourself. My uncle believes in the young roughing it. My allowance is the smallest in educational history.

Dr. F. Lay you a dime that mine is smaller.

Dr. E. (*feeling in his pockets*). I can't see you. I've only a nickel left. My allowance is due this afternoon (*Lays a nickel on the desk.*)

Dr. F. It wouldn't be fair; I should win. My aunt allows me three dollars a week. She's afraid that if I had more, I should succumb to the snares of a great city.

Dr. E. Yes, you'd have won. My uncle allows me fifteen a month. Hereafter I shall regard it as princely. Good afternoon, doctor.

Dr. F. Good afternoon, doctor.

Dr. E. (*returning*). I say! Where have I seen you before?

Dr. F. I can't say positively, but I think it likely we patronize the same-priced restaurants.

In Office Hours

Dr. E. Maybe that's it. Good afternoon.

Dr. F. Good afternoon, doctor. (*He goes out.*)

(*DR. F. laughs and touches a bell on the desk.*

CAESAR enters.)

Dr. F. Is the patient there, Caesar?

Caesar. Ya-as'm. (*He edges around the desk toward the jar of tablets.*)

Dr. F. Tell her to come in.

Caesar (*with his mouth full of tablets*). Ya-as'm. (*He goes out.*)

Dr. F. What's that boy eating? (*Notices that the cover of the jar is off.*) O! That's it, is it? I thought my sugar-of-milk tablets went rather briskly.

(*DR. E. enters.*)

Dr. E. I merely came back to say that I hope if you need a consultant on the case of that one patient of yours you'll remember a fellow-tenant.

Dr. F. You can count on me, if you'll share the proceeds. Meanwhile, what would you advise for an office-boy who consumes sugar-of-milk without asking permission?

Dr. E. (*consulting pocket repertory*). Tartar emetic.

Dr. F. Good. Better than ipecac. I'd been thinking of ipecac.

Dr. E. Either ought to do. If they fail, call me in and I'll try a rattan treatment.

Dr. F. You really have ideas. Good afternoon.

Dr. E. Good afternoon, doctor. (*He goes out.*)

(*DR. F. opens a drawer of the desk and takes out a bottle. She empties the sac-lac tablets out of the jar, and puts back a few that she has moistened from the bottle.*)

In Office Hours

Dr. F. The way of the transgressor will be achey!

(*Enter CAESAR, showing in MRS. SKIPNIX.*)

Mrs. Skip. Is he gone?

(*CAESAR, the doctor purposely not noticing him, steals a handful of the pellets and goes out.*)

Dr. F. Is he gone?

Mrs. Skip. Your young man.

Dr. F. No; he hasn't come yet. I've been waiting for him twenty odd years.

Mrs. Skip. I mean the young man with the hard and evil face that I found here when I first came in. (*Scats herself.*)

Dr. F. I suppose you mean Dr. Eliot, who has desk-room here.

Mrs. Skip. (*hitches chair nearer DR. F.*). O, my dear young friend, do not deceive yourself. The ways of the tempter are —

Dr. F. Your symptoms, please, Mrs. Skipnix?

Mrs. Skip. I never yet was mistook in my judgments of character, and if ever I saw a dark an' evil face —

Dr. F. My time is limited, Mrs. Skipnix, and if you would kindly come to your symptoms —

(*CAESAR enters. His face is less black, by several shades, having an ashen pallor.*)

Caesar. There's another patient askin' for yo', an' I reckon I'm dyin' myself.

Dr. F. I'll see the other patient presently. And you won't die for half an hour or so.

(*CAESAR presses his hands to his stomach, with a hollow groan, and goes out.*)

In Office Hours

Dr. F. Now, your symptoms, Mrs. Skipnix!

Mrs. Skip. If ever I saw a dark an' evil —

Dr. F. (rising impatiently). Really, Mrs. Skipnix, you heard what my office-boy said.

Mrs. Skip. Set down — I'm a comin' to it. It's a perfectly new symptom.

Dr. F. (sits). Where is it?

Mrs. Skip. In my almanac.

Dr. F. In your —

Mrs. Skip. (producing a pamphlet bound in the gaudiest possible colors). In my "Ready Rejuvenator Almanac." They give one away with every two bottles.

Dr. F. Do I understand you are taking another treatment than mine?

Mrs. Skip. Lord bless your soul! did you think any one doctor could cover as many symptoms as I've got? I take your medicine Mondays and Fridays, an' the "Rejuvenator" Wednesdays and Sundays; an' the other days —

Dr. F. Excuse me, Mrs. Skipnix, but until you are prepared to follow my directions exclusively, I must decline to prescribe further for you.

Mrs. Skip. (rising). Well, the conceit of these beginners! My family doctor, says he, Mrs. Skipnix, says he, if I was to undertake to cover all your symptoms, says he, I should have to hire an assistant, says he, besides givin' up week-days an' Sundays to it, says he. An' to think — *(She edges toward the door, the doctor standing and waiting for her to go.)* An' over an' above all, I am bound as a mother to say that of all the dark an' evil faces —

In Office Hours

(DR. F. rings her bell. CAESAR instantly falls into the room, as if he had been leaning against the door on the outside. He is several shades grayer still. He wildly and weakly staggers against MRS. SKIP. in the effort to show her out. She is agitatedly changing her spectacles, with a view to examining him more closely, as they go out together. As they go, DR. ELIOT enters from the other side.)

Dr. F. O my prophetic soul! Were you the other patient?

Dr. E. Not at all, O popular practitioner! There are four, no less, waiting outside. This is your busy day. I merely came back for my umbrella.

Dr. F. Don't tell me it's raining!

Dr. E. Level torrents.

Dr. F. O, my last and only spring bonnet!

Dr. E. I hoped—I mean I was afraid you hadn't any umbrella. May I wait outside and see you to the car?

Dr. F. Will you? O fellow-tenant, you are an angel!

Dr. E. Doctors aren't angels—only angel-makers, now and then. I wait your sovereign leisure. I certainly have seen you somewhere before! (*He goes out.*)

(CAESAR staggers limply in, showing in MR. HUSTLETON. He enters at top speed, watch in hand.)

Hustle. Train to catch, in six and a half minutes. Want a prescription.

Dr. F. (*after critically surveying him through her eyeglasses*). Begun to see snakes yet?

In Office Hours

Hustle. No; nothing bigger than beetles.

Dr. F. Head splitting?

Hustle. Bustin'.

Dr. F. Thirsty?

Hustle. I could bankrupt a reservoir.

Dr. F. (*who has been filling a bottle with tablets*).
There you are. (*Hands him the bottle.*) Live on hot
•beef-tea a day or two; soak your head in ice-water
whenever you get a chance; and pull up. If you don't,
you'll see snakes within a week — good-sized ones, too.
Two dollars, please.

Hustle. (*hands a bill*). There's a V. Never mind
the change. You're the only woman I ever saw that
had a head. (*Goes to door; returns.*) Are you married?

Dr. F. No.

Hustle. Want to be?

Dr. F. Not to-day. There's the change. Good
afternoon.

Hustle. I'm sorry. You've really got a head. (*Looks
at watch.*) Gee! I've got to hustle for that train!
(*Goes out on the run.*)

(*DR. F. rings bell. As before, CAESAR falls in, still
several shades grayer.*)

Dr. F. Well, what next?

Caesar. Death an' de debble, I reckon.

Dr. F. I didn't mean for yourself. I know what is
going to happen to *you*. I meant the next patient.

Caesar. Ya-as'm. (*He staggers out.*)

Dr. F. Three patients! I shall consider taking an
assistant.

In Office Hours

(Enter CAESAR, showing in MR. and MRS. WOBBLEMORE. MR. W. draws his shawl apprehensively about his shoulders.)

Mr. W. (looking affrightedly at CAESAR, who is staggering). There — there's something wrong about that boy — there's something dreadfully wrong.

Dr. F. Yes — that's why I get him cheap. (CAESAR, unobserved, falls down behind sofa, R.)

Mrs. W. Don't bother, Solomon — attend to business!

Mr. W. (feebly seating himself, R. C.). One moment, Maria. There's a draft. I can distinctly feel a draft. I must decline to attend to anything before that draft is attended to.

Mrs. W. Don't bother, Solomon! Do you think you can do anything for him? (Suddenly, to DR. F.)

Dr. F. That depends. What's the matter with him?

Mrs. W. Nothing. (MR. W. moans feebly.)

Dr. F. That's a complicated thing to treat. What's been done for him?

Mrs. W. Everything. We've taken the doctors in alphabetical order. He likes it best that way, for fear I'll skip somebody. He's taken every "pathy" in creation.

Mr. W. I haven't, Maria. There's a new one — clam — clam — its something to do with a clam.

Mrs. W. Don't bother, Solomon. It isn't anything to do with a clam. You haven't struck it yet.

Mr. W. Clam — clam —

Dr. F. Try oyster-pathy. Osteopathy, you know.

Mr. W. That's it.

In Office Hours

Mrs. W. Don't bother, Solomon. The oyster-men come below the F's. She's an F. Go ahead. (DR. F. *draws a chair beside MR. W.; sits.*)

Dr. F. What do you seem to feel, yourself, is the matter with you?

Mr. W. (in a hoarse whisper, pointing to his wife, who is moving about examining the objects in the room). Her!

Dr. F. Eh?

Mr. W. Her. She's the matter with me. She married me in infancy. In *my* infancy. She was a friend of my mother's. I was born delicate. She married me to toughen me. She's awfully tough herself. She's almost killed me. She gives me an ice-cold bath every morning —

Mrs. W. Solomon, don't bother! You see, don't you, Doctor, there's nothing on earth the matter with him. He might as well go to oyster-pathy.

Mr. W. (in the same sepulchral whisper). She makes me sleep on a mattress that ain't any thicker than an envelope. She —

Dr. F. See here — how would you like to go south? With a nurse, you know? With a personally selected nurse?

Mr. W. (with a gasp of ecstacy). Alone? (DR. F. *nods.*) By myself? (Nods again.) Without her? (DR. F. *nods.*) Gee!! (With a wide, pale grin.)

Dr. F. (rises). Madam, if you really wish my opinion on your husband's condition, it is that he needs toughening. (MR. W. *gives a short groan.*)

Mrs. W. Haven't I said so for the last ten years? Haven't I —

In Office Hours

Dr. F. Undoubtedly. But in my opinion, a husband, while he is in his wife's too indulgent care, is shielded from the influences that tend to genuine toughening. (*MR. W. grins feebly.*) I should recommend, in your husband's case, a trip without your company, in the hands of an unsympathetic professional nurse—a rather prolonged trip (*MR. W.'s grin widens.*), say to Cuba, or Jamaica.

Mr. W. What's the matter with the Philippines, Maria?

Mrs. W. Don't bother, Solomon, with what doesn't concern you! That's a good notion, Doctor. (*MR. W. rises and moves gently to door.*) And it would give me time for a little steeplechasing—I think well of it. Two dollars?

Dr. F. Two dollars. Thank you.

Mr. W. By myself! At a safe distance! Tol-de-lol-de-lol— (*He executes a few feeble and ungainly dance-steps.*)

Mrs. W. Solomon! (*She goes out.*)

Mr. W. (collapsing). I felt a draft, my dear—I felt a draft. (*To DR. F., in a hoarse whisper, as he goes.*) I'm going to send you a cheque to-morrow!

(*As MR. and MRS. W. go out, MISS GOLFE enters, on the run, nearly oversetting them.*)

Miss G. (rushing up to DR. F.). I say! It's awfully wrong to marry, isn't it, now, when you have epileptic fits?

Dr. F. (after a gasp). Awfully.

Miss G. Then I'm going to have 'em!

Dr. F. To order?

In Office Hours

Miss G. To order! I was a peach in college theatricals. Say — he'll be here in a minute. It's like this. My stepmother wants me to marry a fool. He's her nephew — he's got some money. I can't go away till I'm of age, and I won't have him botherin' round. I told him I had epileptic fits. He said he didn't believe it. I told him you were my doctor, and you would tell him —

Dr. F. But, my dear child —

Miss G. O, hold on a minute! All you've got to tell him is that it's wicked to marry any one with epileptic fits, and I'll do the rest.

Dr. F. But —

Miss G. (*rushing across to chair, R. C.*). O, this is him!

(*MR. VAN SHEKELS enters.*)

Mr. V. S. You are Miss Golfe's physician?

Dr. F. Is that her name? I — I mean — yes; I suppose so.

Mr. V. S. Do you consider —

(*MISS G. shows signs of approaching fits.*)

Dr. F. That marriage, with a history of previous epilepsy, is justifiable? Distinctly, I do not.

Mr. V. S. But the question is, don't you know —
(*Here MISS G. gives a loud scream, and falls into a most appalling fit.*)

Dr. F. (*rushing to MISS G. and tending her*). You see for yourself. The very sight of you has brought her malady on this unhappy girl. I beg of you, leave her to me. Make no further effort to see her.

Mr. V. S. Effort to see her? I'm going to take passage on a Cunarder! (*Goes hastily.*)

In Office Hours

Miss G. (embracing DR. F.). O, you cherub! I've done it! (*Goes to mirror; puts on hat.*) You stood by me like a man and a brother! What's your fee?

Dr. F. (out of breath; laughing). Nothing, thank you. It's enough to abet a felony, without getting paid for it!

Miss G. Bless you!

(*Exit.*)

Dr. F. (sinks into a chair). This has been a very busy day, indeed! Whew! I wonder if there are any more! (*Rings bell.*) Caesar! Caesar! I wonder if that boy is dead? I'm beginning to be scared!

(*Enter DR. ELIOT.*)

Dr. E. Did anybody call?

Dr. F. O, I'm so glad you waited! Where on earth do you suppose Caesar is?

(*A weak voice from behind the sofa moans, "Here I is, Miss Doctor Floyd!" DR. ELIOT makes a dive and drags out CAESAR, bleached almost white, and in a state of utter collapse. They carry him to chair, R. C.*)

Dr. F. O, my goodness gracious! Rub his hands, can't you. What in the world antidotes tartar emetic?

Dr. E. How should I know? I passed my exams. six months ago!

Dr. F. You helped me kill him — I should think you might help me bring him to!

Dr. E. O, if that's all! (*In a dreamy voice.*) There's a circus in town. (*CAESAR shows abrupt signs of returning animation.*) It has monkeys, and a pony with a spotted tail. I was thinking of giving Caesar a ticket to that circus — I'm sorry he's dead.

In Office Hours

Caesar (reviving abruptly). I ain't dead, Massa Doctor Eliot — I reckon I kin go to dat circus. Did yo' say he had a spotted tail? I feels a heap aliver. But O, Massa Doctor Eliot! De things dat have been happening in my insides!

Dr. F. Get up. I'm glad you didn't die this time. You shall have some peanuts to eat at the circus. Go and lock up the anteroom. (*CAESAR makes a wobbly exit.*) I'm glad, on the whole, that office-hours are over! Does it still rain?

Dr. E. No. It has cleared off! That's what I stayed to tell you.

Dr. F. (putting on her hat and gloves. He assisting her). Thank you. Do you remember where you saw me, yet?

Dr. E. Just not quite. I seem to remember that there were Japanese lanterns — and there was music somewhere.

Dr. F. Yes. The band was in front of Holworthy. They were playing the Waldteufel waltzes. I wore muslins then, and I hadn't graduated into eyeglasses. That was your Freshman year at Harvard. It was ever so long ago.

Dr. E. Jupiter Tonans! You don't mean to tell me you're the little Sally Floyd my sister chummed with in the prep. school!

Dr. F. I'm the Sally Floyd, without the little.

Dr. E. And you knew all the time?

Dr. F. Of course. Did you suppose I'd have gone shares in an office with a gentleman of unknown antecedents?

In Office Hours

Dr. E. Shake hands! (*Catches her hand, holds it till she withdraws it. He takes both hands.*) Do shake hands! This is the very jolliest go that ever I hit! I say! — We can begin just where we left off, can't we?

Dr. F. Well — not precisely — perhaps —

Dr. E. No-o — I remember. (*He puts on her jacket.*) I used to kiss you sometimes, when you were in the prep. school. We'll begin just a step or two back, since it's too early for us to be buying furniture together — I mean too late — too *late* for us to be buying furniture together.

Dr. F. It's been a riotous afternoon. Too much money always makes me nervous. Don't you want to go to the opera? I owe you a consultation fee on Caesar's case, you know.

Dr. E. Overjoyed! My allowance must have come by this time. . . . We'll have supper at the Touraine.

Dr. F. I'm glad that you remember now where you saw me. It's jolly to have Mamie's brother for a fellow-tenant.

Dr. E. (*as they go out together*). Jolly is no name for it! I mean I am so glad to be chums with Mamie's sister — I mean — I wish it weren't too early to buy furniture — I mean, too late to — too late to —

(*They go out together he still protesting and she laughing at him.*)

CURTAIN.

A QUILTING PARTY IN THE THIRTIES

An *Outline* SKETCH for MUSIC

by EVELYN GREENLEAF SUTHERLAND

(Originally produced in connection with the Pageant *Our New England*, at the *Boston Theatre*, April 10, 1899)

A QUILTING PARTY IN THE THIRTIES C H A R A C T E R S

ELDER DAVID ELLIOTT

HENRY HOLLISTER

Originally played by MR. JOHN
FRANKLIN BOTUME

SAUL APTHORP

REUBEN LUDD (TENOR)

JIM SMALL (VIOLIN)

BEN COOPER (GUITAR)

GRANDMA PAMELA REDTHORNE Originally played by Miss
BERTHA SWIFT

PERSIS REDTHORNE

Originally played by Miss MAUD
BLACKMER

RACHEL REDTHORNE

ABIGAIL APTHORP

Originally played by Miss AGNES
EVERETT

A CHORUS OF FIFTY OR SO YOUNG PEOPLE

THE PERIOD IS 1830 THE PLACE IS THE REDTHORNE FARM IN
NORTHERN MAINE THE TIME IS THE EARLY
EVENING OF A WINTER'S DAY

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A Quilting Party in the 'Thirties

SCENE. — *The interior of an old-fashioned kitchen. There is a great fireplace, with a fire burning, R. Strings of onions, dried apples, hams, etc., hang from the rafters. There is a large "dresser," back, L. with old-fashioned china, polished tins, etc. A spinning-wheel. An old-time clock. A door, back, R. Opaque windows; it being night. The kitchen is lighted by many tallow candles. A set of quilting-frames are at L. 3. Over the fireplace is a "Queen's arm" musket. All the young people are in the centre of the stage, singing vigorously under the direction of HENRY HOLLISTER, the village schoolmaster. GRANDMOTHER REDTHORNE sits in a great arm-chair by the fire. ELDER ELLIOTT stands by her chair, gently beating time to the music. The selection is "China." At its conclusion, the group of singers breaks up; the girls go to the quilting-frames and set them in motion; the young men bashfully assist them. The GRANDMOTHER and the ELDER fall into quiet talk. PERSIS REDTHORNE comes forward, her eyes reddened with tears; she surreptitiously wipes them. HOLLISTER watches her from a little distance. RACHEL REDTHORNE comes down to PERSIS.*

Rachel. They will see thee, dear coz! Dry thine eyes, sweeting; they will rebuke thee for such a face on thy birthday!

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Persis. Let them! Was ever anything so cruel?

Rachel. As the Elder's choosing this night of nights to take your house for his lodging? It is a hard wager. We had thought to be so gay!

Persis. Fine gayety, to stand and sing, and sing, songs of the tomb, and the worm, and —

Abigail Apthorp (coming suddenly behind them). The devil! (They spring to either side, with a little scream.)

Abi. Nay! I did but finish the tale of what songs we sang.

Persis. O, Gail! Is't not cruel that Elder Elliott must needs come to-night, and put all our birthday gayety to rout?

Abi. Truly the good Elder seems the right man in the wrong place, as said the maid who was kissed by her sister's husband.

Rachel. Hush! The Elder may hear thee!

Abi. He has joked jokes in his days, or I cannot read the angles of a man's eyes. But his day is at sunset, and it darkens all our noon. Picture it! We might even have danced a reel!

Hollister. There are two lads in the woodshed, Mistress Persis, and under their jackets they hide each a fiddle. They said they heard there was sport toward at the Redthorne Farm to-night, and they would gladly lend their gypsy music for a supper and a bed in the hay.

Rachel. The fiddlers to our call, and the Elder at the hearth! Dear Gail, name him again, of whom you said we sang!

A Quilting Party in the Thirties

Abi. The de— (*PERSIS puts her hand over ABIGAIL's lips.*)

Persis. Master Hollister, look not too closely at mine eyes! I am as a very child at the loss of my birthday sport!

Holl. Be comforted, dear Mistress Persis! Be— (*He bends more closely over her.*)

Abi. Ay, by all means be— (*she blows a kiss*) dear Mistress Persis, since Master Hollister is so willing for the consolation, but not so near the Grandame and the Elder!

Persis (*moving timidly from HOLLISTER*). Ah, Gail! Shame to you! (*HOLLISTER and PERSIS move up stage.*)

Abi. Nay, tell the truth and shame the — sh! Do I not know the symptoms of courting, and my wedding ring a year old?

Rach. And your husband —

Abi. Asleep in the corner, bless him! With his courting over for safe and all! Rachel! Rachel! Think of me! Our fun and our dance must somehow be saved to us, Elder or no Elder. All men are some woman's subjects; would we could find her who could queen it over the Elder!

Rachel. Such a queen was Grandma Redthorne once.

Abi. Good luck! O best good luck! Do you mean that the Elder once came a-wooing Grandma Redthorne?

Rachel. He has wooed none since; and it is fifty years.

A Quilting Party in the Thirties

Abi. Good luck indeed. Grandma's eyes are bright still, and she is no foe to youth and folly. Our sport is sure.

Rachel. What are you planning, madcap?

Abi. Trust me and wait.

Rachel. Too late! See, the Elder! (ABIGAIL goes down stage, and talks with GRANDMA REDTHORNE.)

Elder Elliott (*speaking to the company. His manner is authoritative, yet gentle*). It is good that the gatherings of the young move to the sound of godly music. Is there none of the youth or maidens who can lift another sacred song?

Abi. Ay, sure Elder! That can my good man! Wake, Saul, and lift thy voice in song! (*She shakes SAUL APTHORP, who is asleep and snoring in an arm-chair.*)

Saul. Is it day so soon, wife Abigail! Nay but the nights are short!

Abi. Wake quickly! Thou art needed to lift thy voice in the hymn of good "Dundee."

Elder (*regarding SAUL over his spectacles with apprehension*). Dundee hath many verses, and her good-man hath not the air of a singing brother.

Holl. His bull, Bashan, in the south pasture, can lift a tune more tunefully than he!

Grandma. Madcap jade, my niece Abigail!

Saul. Sing? Wife Abigail, ever did'st thou say—

Abi. I say now what I say! Sing!

Saul (*bewildered, but meek.*) Ay, wife Abigail.

(SAUL drones out, in an interminable, tuneless bellow, a verse of "Dundee." The company cannot disguise

A Quilting Party in the Thirties

their dismay. Some stop their cars. Great distress grows on the ELDER'S face. ABIGAIL softly beats time to her husband's singing, with an expression of placid pride and pleasure.)

Elder E. (at conclusion of verse. Hurricdly). Goodman Apthorp seems weary. And "Dundee" hath many verses. Let us come to his aid, and unite in a chorus. Master Hollister, will you assemble our friends, and instruct them in a suitable number?

(HOLL. assembles the company into position, as at rise of curtain. He gives them instruction in dumb show.)

Abi. I do not think "Dundee" will be in demand by the pious, for a day or two!

Reuben Ludd (crossing toward chorus with RACHEL). 'Tis aguish sport, to chant plain-songs when one had come in the hope of a lively kissing-game!

Rachel. Shame upon thee Reuben!

Ren. Shame, that I speak to thee of kissing?

Rach. Nay, shame that thou did'st speak of it so loud!

(They join the chorus. HOLLISTER taps with his tuning-fork. All sound. The chorus sings "Strike the Cymbals" with the greatest vim and gusto.)

Grandma (to the ELDER. The groups are once more breaking up. The young men and women pair off, and sit and move about, in picturesque groups, chatting). 'Tis a fine, martial, ringing song, the "Cymbals!" I aye liked it well.

Elder. Thy preference was ever for the church militant, Pamela. To my pain, I learned that lesson, fifty years ago.

A Quilting Party in the Thirties

Grandma. The man that carried that musket, up there, gave me the legacy of fighting blood. 'Twas kin of mine helped brew the tea the Indians made, in Boston Harbor. I was not born or bred an olive-branch, David, whatever the Scripture saith.

Elder. I heard thee sing, in the old years, Pamela, a good song of that same tea. It is not a Scriptural song, but it lifteth the heart very pleasantly. Wilt thou not sing again that song, for the old years' sake?

Grandma. I sing? Nay, my voice hath flown away on the wings of the old years.

(The young people surround her, persuading her.)

Persis. As a birthday giving, grandma!

(GRANDMA sings "Revolutionary Tea"; the young people, who are grouped around and behind her, joining in the chorus.)

Elder E. Nay, a dear song! A dear song! The new songs cannot mate it!

Grandma. What know you of the new songs? You hear but the echoes of a dusty pulpit! Master Hollister, do you and three of your most tuneful scholars sing us a new song, and let it be a song of love!

Per. Thou dearest grandma! *(Hugs her.)*

Elder E. Of love? Fearest thou not, Pamela, that with all these youths and maidens—

Grandma. When young lips are but singing of love, David, they are put to truly safe use! Now, Master Hollister!

(HOLLISTER, PERSIS, RACHEL and REUBEN sing "Love's Young Dream," as a quartette, with the verses

A Quilting Party in the Thirties

sung as solos. *The chorus repeats, piano, the last two lines of each verse.*)

Elder E. (repeating softly, half in speech, half in song). O, there's nothing half so sad in life as love's young dream — as love's young dream.

(The young people move quietly away, leaving the old couple alone.)

Grandma. Nay, old friend! The pine is green even when the snow lies thick on the dead roses. Love's young dream is as the rose; but the faithful pine is old, tried friendship!

(He takes her hand and kisses it.)

Abi. If ever, now — now!

(She hurries to the door, and beckons. Enter JIM SMALL, and BEN COOPER, two gypsyish lads, ragged, with fiddles sticking out from under their jackets.)

Rachel. Grandmother, here are two lads, from off the road, who ask a sup of something hot and comforting. 'Tis a cold night.

Grandma. When ever did the Redthorne Farm refuse bite and sup to a wayfarer, warm night or cold? Make them freely welcome!

(The two boys bow and scrape, grinning.)

Elder (peering at them, benevolently). Be those infants, they shelter so kindly from the cold?

Jim (producing his fiddle, with a chuckle). The baby have a fine strong voice in his little stomach, Master Parson!

(Sensation. The young people crowd forward, breathlessly.)

Saul. The cat's out o' the bag, as well as the fiddle!

A Quilting Party in the Thirties

Elder E. It is Belial that is come amongst us !

Reu. I said it ! Our bird is cooked !

Hol. Brown !

Grandma. Nay then, David, Belial is an old friend of thine and mine. Hast forgotten the dance in Eaton's barn, when the old days were young ? We danced that dance together, David ; were we ever the worse of it ?

Elder E. It gave me a heartache, Pamela, that has lasted me for five-and-forty years. What was the tune the fiddles played that summer night, Pamela ?

(*ABIGAIL softly makes signal to the boys ; they begin to play " The Girl I Left Behind Me," very quietly at first, then clearly. The ELDER is lost in reverie. ABIGAIL forms all the company for the dance. At the end of the first round of it, when the lad is chasing his partner about for a kiss, the ELDER comes suddenly out of his reverie. He draws himself up sternly. At the sound of his voice, with its severe ecclesiastical ring, the dance pauses, the young people shrinking in fright.*)

Elder E. What is this ? I say what have we here ?

Grandma (*rising, laying her hand on his arm, and smiling up at him.*) What is it, David ? Don't you know ? 'Tis the dance we danced together, in Eaton's barn !

(*The ELDER relaxes his stern face. He quietly lays his hand over hers, as it lies on his arm. They watch the dance as it goes on. At the end, as the last lad is chasing his partner for a kiss, the ELDER suddenly catches GRANDMA'S hand, and draws her into the dance, "foot-ing" it gayly, the young people laughing and applauding.*)

CURTAIN.

IN
AUNT CHLOE'S CABIN
A Negro-Comedy SKETCH in One ACT

by EVELYN GREENLEAF SUTHERLAND

(Originally produced by the *Woman's Professional League*
of New York City, at their famous "all woman's" Minstrel Show,
at *Hammerstein's Olympia Theatre*, May 12, 1898)

IN AUNT CHLOE'S CABIN C H A R A C T E R S

AS ORIGINALLY CAST

MAM' MARTHY	-	-	-	-	MRS. W. G. JONES
STARILLA EUGENIA	-	-	-	-	MISS LAVINIA SHANNON
AUNT CHLOE	-	-	-	-	MRS. CHAS. CRAIG
MISS MOLLIE	-	-	-	-	MISS CLARA EVERETT
MISS MARCIA	-	-	-	-	MISS MABEL NORTON
MISS CATHARINE	-	-	-	-	MISS BESSIE GRAHAM
MISS EDITH	-	-	-	-	MISS ELLA GUTHRIDGE
LILLY LOO	-	-	-	-	MISS DAISY LOVERING
SARA SAPPHIRA	-	-	-	-	MRS. EMMA SHERIDAN FRY
MRS. DOCTOR DOLPHUS	-	-	-	-	MISS LOUISE RIAL
MRS. EDITOR EMS	-	-	-	-	MISS ANN WARRINGTON
MRS. JUDGE JONES	-	-	-	-	MISS LIZZIE RECHELLE
MRS. COLONEL CRACKEM	-	-	-	-	MISS JULIA RALPH
THE TWINSON TWINS					
THALIA DEBORAH					
MELPOMENE SIDDONS					

MEMBERS OF THE SHUCKTOWN MILITIA, ETC.

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In Aunt Chloe's Cabin

SCENE. — *The interior of a negro cabin. The back and sides are of rough logs. A fireplace, L. Seats of cut-down barrels, boxes, wooden benches and broken chairs. A possum is roasting whole before the fire. Corn-cake is baking, in cover tins, upon the hearth. The cabin is illuminated by candles stuck in bottles, and by "pine-knots," in rings, on the wall. Pictures from illustrated papers are pinned to the walls. At the R. is a table covered with a black cloth; on it candles are burning, in black bottles; there is a large black teapot on it, and some black cups and saucers. MAM' MARTHY, a hag-like old woman of ninety, black, withered, ceric, is crouching over the fire, from an armchair in the chimney corner, L. Before the curtain rises, there are heard the gleeful shouts of children. As the curtain rises, a crowd of "pickaninnies," a dozen or more, of ages varying from two to eleven, are rolling and running about, cluding STARILLA EUGENIA, who is hopelessly pursuing first one and then another, and calling to them, coaxing. After the curtain has risen, enter AUNT CHLOE, in haste and indignantly. AUNT CHLOE is a fat, comely, good-humored darkey of fifty, with a bright apron and turban, prosperous-looking, and neat. STARILLA EUGENIA is an ungainly, very black girl of sixteen, tall, gaunt, with hair tightly braided in innumerable pig-tails; she is dressed in a piece of sacking, on whose back the letters "C. O. D. HANDLE WITH CARE!" are plainly visible.*

In Aunt Chloe's Cabin

Chloc. Name o' judgment, Starilla Eugenia, why am dose young 'uns racketin' like chickens wid de deleterious timmins, when I done said day wuz to be in baid befo' candle-light?

St. Eu. Ask de debble, Aunt Chloe, ma'am! Ask de debble! I done started in fo' to bed dese pickaninies when de sun wuz two hour high, an' I done chased 'em f'om Dan to Beersheep, an' back again, an' I ain't got no bref, an' I ain't got no —

Chloc. You ain't got no sense! Dat's what yo' ain't got! I done wonder what I feed yo' fo'! When I done want anything else done, I'll jest send de ol' jack-ass; he'll do jes' as much, an' he'll do it a blame sight quicker!

St. Eu. (sits down suddenly on the floor, with a loud and dismal wail). O, Aunt Chloe, ma'am, may de Lawd look down—

Chloc. De Lawd'll have to look down moughty far, ter a moughty hot place, ef he's goin' to look whar yo'll land! Quit dat fool projeckin' an ketch dese young 'uns! What'll de company think, comin' to a party, an' findin' a baby-show!

St. Eu. May de Lawd look down! (*She gets up, and resumes her chasing of the children, in which CHLOE joins. The children escape them, laughing and shouting. CHLOE catches off her enormous carpet-slipper and flourishes it wildly.*)

Chloc. Ef I once put yo' under dis slipper, yo'll be flatter'n Jim Dall's rooster after he done scrapped de steam-roller! Yo' onery little debbles!

Mam' Mar. (she speaks in a tiny, high, thin, cerie

In Aunt Chloe's Cabin

voice). O, jes' let dem pickaninnies projec'—jes' let dem projec'—an' den see who comes a-visitin' wen dey's in baid, in de dark!

(The children stop their riot, instantly, and creep over to the chimney corner, staring at her in horrified fascination.)

St. Eu. De Lawd look down! Who'll come, Mam' Marthy?

Mam' Mar. He'll be taller'n de chimney, one ob his eyes'll be red, like dat coal, dar, and de udder be yaller like de candle flame, an' he'll come a-creepin', an' a-creepin' to de baid, an' he'll say,—“Whar's de chile dat ain't asleep 'fo' candle light? I jes' a-lookin' fo' dat chile, to take him wid me to de col', col' grave, to keep me warm dar, till de worms —”

(Her voice is drowned in a yell of universal horror. The children, with broken exclamations of repentance, scurry off. ST. EU. sits down on the floor, in hysterics.)

St. Eu. Taller'n de chimney! O, may de Lawd look down! An one eye red as dat coal!! O may de —

(There is a rap on the kitchen door. ST. EU. yells afresh.)

Chloe. If yo' don't quit dat yell-a-hoolin', yo' bow-legged calliope, an' open dat do' fo' de company, I'll wear yo' to frazzles!

(ST. EU. gets up, tremblingly, and moves toward door murmuring in terror, “One eye as big as dat chimney! May de” etc. She opens the door; MISS MOLLIE enters. MISS MOLLIE is a pretty girl of sixteen, white, nicely dressed. CHLOE, at sight of her, gives a cry of joy, and catches her in her arms.)

In Aunt Chloe's Cabin

Chloe. O my lamb! O my blessin'! Huccome yo' get back from de school, when dere ain't no vacancy till Christmas?

Mollie. Why, you see, Aunt Chloe, the scarlet fever broke out, and they sent us all home.

Chloe. Praise de Lawd fo' His mercies! That fever obtruded a-puppus, to fetch yo' home in time fo' my party.

Mollie. Party?

Chloe. Laws, yaas, honey! We-uns givin' a big party to-night to all de new 'ficial folks, all de doctor, an' de lawyer, an' de editor, an' de stage-ladies, an' —

Mollie. New ones? Why, where are the old ones?

Chloe. De ol' one was all men, honey, an dey didn't want no 'ceptions; but de new ones was women, an' yo' know what women is, fo' parties, an' dignitaries, an' flummuxes.

Mollie. But why are the new ones all women? You mean to say the Doctor —

St. Eu. Laws, yaas, Miss Mollie; de Doctor am a woman, an' de Judge am a woman, an' de Cunnel —

Chloe. Starilla Eugenia, does yo' want yo' nose broke off?

(*ST. EU. retires precipitately.*)

Mollie. But, Aunt Chloe, where are all the men?

Chloe. Where de men ought to be, honey; fightin' down Aguinaldo's way! Dere ain't one las' man lef' in Shucktown, an' de women is done 'lected deirselves to all de offices. An' dey said as I was de social lead-ress, an' de first hundred in de four —

St. Eu. And made de best possum stew —

In Aunt Chloe's Cabin

Chloe (catches up broom, and drives ST. EU. from the room). Yo' pigeon-toed monument.

St. Eu. (fleeing). May de Lawd look down! (*Exit.*)

Mollie. The men are all gone, Auntie?

Chloe. All gone, honey, to help fight, an' de new woman fisherals was —

Mollie. "Fisherals?" O, yes — officials. Go on.

Chloe. De new women fisherals is goin' to have a reception hya to-night. An' we wants it all in the rooster-cracked style on dis yearth; an' my niece Sara Sapphira, what's jest give up her place in Boston, Massachusetts, 'count ob havin' de nervous persecution, she's goin' to operate de whole diversion; an' my granchile, Lillie Loo, she's gwine to po' de tea!

Mollie. How many grandchildren have you, I wonder, Aunt Chloe? It seems to me you're always introducing a new one.

Chloe. Lawd love yo,' chile, *I* don' know! Nebber could keep count ob my children, eben! Lemme see — I had seven by my fust, an' eleben by my second, an' two by my third. He was de one dat got blowed up on de train, when we'd been married six months — an' thirteen by my fourth — an' then dere was eight or nine ob my own.

(*The door is flung violently open, and MRS. DOCTOR DOLPHUS enters. She wears an exaggerated make-up as a woman doctor, and carries a bag.*)

Mrs. D. Huccome you've had a death in this family and not called in a doctör to be 'sponsible?

Chloe. Lawd, Mrs. Dr. Dolphus, how abrupt you is? There ain't ben no death, ma'm, not in our family; I

In Aunt Chloe's Cabin

wouldn't presume, ma'm, to have no deaths, ma'm, the family doctor wasn't 'sponsible for!

Mrs. D. (*points to black-covered table, R.*). Den how does yo' explain dese colloquialisms ob de tomb? I saw dem troo de window, an' I nearly had peregrination ob de heart.

Mollic (*with a cry*). O my goodness, Aunt Chloe, how awful! Why didn't you tell me?

(*ST. EU. rushes in.*)

St. Eu. O, is he come? His one eye as big — (*She is transfixed by a glare from CHLOE, and subsides.*)

Chloc. Name ob de Lawd, is yo' all conjured? Dat ain't no post mortem ornament, dat ain't; dat's de table fo' our black tea!

(*Enter SARA SAPPHIRA and LILLY LOO. The former is a handsome negro wench showily dressed, in caricature of fashionable styles. The latter is a delicate and pretty "yellow girl," rather pale and listless, very prettily and simply dressed in a neat print frock.*)

Sara. Name o' judgment, Ma'm Chloe, who eber said "black tea"?

Chloc. Yo' said black tea, yo' wench, an' dat's why de black tea prevaricates dar!

Sara. I said colored tea, Ma'm Chloe! Yo' hears wid yo' mouf, seems to me!

Chloc. Well, colored meant black when I was born a nigger!

Mollic. I reckon she meant that folks give teas, Auntie, where everything is one pretty color — the flowers, and the cloth, and the dishes —

Mrs. D. "Colored tea!" Looks mo' like a black buryin'!

In Aunt Chloe's Cabin

Mollie. I'll bring down some pretty blue dishes, Aunt Chloe, and you shall have a blue tea!

Chloe. Fo' de Lawd, chile, I don' drink no blue tea; it's bad as a conjure!

St. Eu. An' mus' de possum turn blue, Miss Mollie?

Mollie. And we'll all come down, Auntie — Edith, and Marcia, and the rest; you know, at colored teas, they always have some one to sing for them; and we'll be your minstrels to-night!

Chloe. Yo, alluz was a serabin, chile!

(Exit MOLLIE.)

Sara (to ST. EU.). Come here, yo' lazy nigger, an' help me disembarass dis monument!

(She begins to pull the tea table to pieces.)

St. Eu. (approaches, gingerly). It looks pow'ful conjuresome! Are yo' sho' he ain't under dere?

Sara. He? Who?

St. Eu. He's taller'n a pine-tree, an' he's got three red eyes, an'—

Chloe. Doctor Dolphus, mam, would yo' mind look-in' at my Lilly Loo? She's ben a-droopin', ma'm, eber since winter. She —

Dr. D. What am de special mizry, Lilly Loo?

Lil. Dere ain't no mizry, thank yo', Doctor, ma'm. I'm jest tired o' things.

Dr. D. Dat sounds liversome to me, or maybe it am de muscles ob de 'pendicitis.

(Comic business, to be improvised by actress, of making examination by stethoscope, hand-mirror, etc.)

St. Eu. O, Ma'm Doctor, please! Ef yo' would look down me with dat mirror, please, ma'm, an' lo-

In Aunt Chloë's Cabin

cate dat nickel I done swallowed when I was picka-ninny !

Chloc. Quit yo' foolin', an' set up, proper ! De party am a comin' !

(Enter the JUDGE, the EDITOR, the TWINSON TWINS, and any other characters that may be improvised. There is the business of receiving them. The EDITOR goes about making society notes with pencil and book. There is local talk, introducing local hits and up-to-date news from the war. Each can write in something for herself.)

Chloc. An' whar am de ladies ob de militia, Jedge Jones, ma'm ?

Judge J. Dey'll be here on a 'brevity, ma'm. Mrs. Col. Crackem she was retinered, ma'm, by havin' to court-martial Mrs. Lieutenant Lamkin with a hickory bud.

Editor E. What I would ask, ma'm, life bein' truncated, an' the paper most ready fo' p'intin', is whar am de entertainment, an' de possum ?

Chloc. De entertainment will done begin, ladies, with a solone by de two Twinson twins.

(Specialty.)

Judge J. An' about dat corn-cake ?

Chloc (uncovers the corn-cake on the hearth, and gives a cry of dismay). Children ob Israel ! Dat hoe-cake am burnt black as de frogs ob Egypt ! Whar's dat fool nigger ? Whar's dat Starilla Eugenia ? What did I done tell yo' about tendin' dat cake ?

St. Eu. I done tend it ! May de Lawd look down ! I done burnt it on puppus ! Yo' said yo' wanted a black tea, an' I done thought de hoe-cake mus' be burned a color to correspond !

In Aunt Chloe's Cabin

Chloe. Ef yo' don' turn out a yellow hoe-cake, in ten minutes thar will be another court-martial, when Mrs. Col. Crackem comes wid dat hickory bud!

St. Eu. De Lawd look down!

(She exits hurriedly.)

Judge J. Nothin' mo' easier dan to be a jedge, ef ye know how! I done ain't hardly had a case ter try, sence I rejudicated de Robinsons' hawg!

Editor E. Ef yo' wouldn't mind subtailin' fo' de Shucktown Rooster, mam, de innermos' fax o' dat case, Sis' Jones? *(Produces note-book.)*

Judge J. Fo' sho', Sis Ems, fo' sho'! Yo' see, Sis' Robinson she say dat hawg was her hawg, an' Sis' Smith she say she lie, dat hawg was *her* hawg, an' I say, bein' jedge, I say, "Huccome yo' scrap 'bout dat hawg, wen dat hawg am in de pen o' Jedge Jones, bein' seized fo' costs?"

(There is the bustle of an arrival, outside.)

Chloe. Decompose yo'selves, ladies! Here's de quality from de house!

(Enter Misses MOLLIE, CATHERINE, MARCIA, EDITH, etc.)

Chloe. Lawd bless yo' hearts, honeys, we's analysed wid de honor ob dis ascension; dat we is!

Marcia. It's we who are honored, Auntie, at being called to entertain all the officials of Shucktown! Well, what shall it be first? A story, or a song?

(Here can be introduced specialties, ad. lib.)

Editor E. Come, Lilly Loo, I don't like to see you so pale in all this fun?

Chloe. Yaas, Doctor Dolphus, ma'm, has you subscribed fo' Lilly Loo, yet?

In Aunt Chloe's Cabin

Dr. D. I has tole her, Aunt Chloe, mam, dat ef she soak a rabbit's hind paw fo' three days in a gallon o' gin, an' den take a cupful five times a day, she won't have no mo' mizry dis side o' Kingdom Come.

St. Eu. Fo' Gawd, she won't have no time to have nothin'; she'd be *in* Kingdom Come after the second cup?

Catherinc. I reckon the best prescription for Lilly Loo would be to get Jake home from the war?

Sara. I reckon *dat* prescription's goin' to be swaltered by 'nother young 'ooman?

(LILLY LOO *breaks into piteous crying.*)

Chloe. Name ob de livin' Moses! Am *dat* de matter wid my Lilly Loo? Hab a witch-wench stole her plight?

Sara. Don' know 'bout no witches; but ef one pusson's eyes shine mo' dan 'nother pusson's eyes, I don' know as a feller's to blame fo' seeing it!

Mollie. For shame, Sara Sapphira! You know Jake and Mollie were to have been married this month, if he hadn't gone to the war!

Sara. But yo' see he *did* go to the war Miss Mollie; an' maybe he'll do' nother marryin' when he comes back.

(*She tosses her head, and ostentatiously fondles a ring with a gandy glass stone that she wears.*)

Chloe. Who gibbed yo' dat ring?

(*This scene is worked up to a tragic pitch, by the tense attention and the pantomimic dismay of the onlookers.*)

Sara. Ask Lilly Loo to guess!

Chloe. Take it off, yo' devil's shoat!

Sara. I reckon not, Aunt Chloe, ma'm!

In Aunt Chloe's Cabin

Mam' Mar. O, let her keep it on, let her keep it on, an' look at her finger, when de next moon fulls!

Sara (uncasily). What yo' sayin', Mam' Marthy?

Mam' Mar. I'se jest sayin', let de wench wot steals de little gal's man wear dat man's ring li'l longer. Jest till de finger begin to grow big, an' big, an' big, an' dere's somefin' inside dat finger dat moves, an' squirms, an' crawls — an' bimeby it's de full ob de moon, and de debble thing in de finger breaks de skin, an' looks up wid a little green eye, an' hisses, — “Dat *finger* ain't big nuff lodgin' fo' me, no mo'; let me find dat girl's black heart!”

(SARA, *who has been listening in a trance of horror, breaks into an insane scream.*)

Sara. O, Mam' Marthy! O, name o' Gawd! Take away de conjo'! take away de conjo'!

(*She tears madly at the ring.*)

Mam' Mar. Huccome de ring don' come off? Huccome dat ring don' come off?

Sara. O yo'se conjured it on! Yo'se conjured de debble thing on!

(*Throws herself prone on the floor, beating her forehead against it.*)

Mam' Mar. Am it a *lie* dat holds dat ring on?

Sara. O Gawd, yes, it am a lie! It am a lie!

Mam' Mar. Git down dar to Lilly Loo, an' 'fess yo' lie!

(SARA, *as if hypnotized, drags herself to LILLY's feet.*)

Sara. O Lilly Loo! 'Twas all a lie! All a lie! Jake nebber give me no ring! I thought mebbe yo'd tink he did, an' send Jake away, an' I'd catch him!

In Aunt Chloe's Cabin

(*The ring comes off her finger, and she flings it into the fire.*)

Lilly. Don' cry, Sara Sapphira! De conjo's done gone; an' Jake he shan't know nothin'—an' I'll be well now—an'—don' cry, Sara Sapphira!

Sara (*weakly; crouching*). O, Mam' Marthy! Am de conjo' gone?

Mam' Mar. De conjo' done gone sound *asleep*, Sara Sapphira—till de *lie* wakes it up again!

(*Exeunt LILLY, supporting the hysterical SARA.*)

(*A sound of violent altercation is heard outside.*)

Chloe. Name ob Joshua! What am dat? My nerveses am a frazzle, fo' sho'!

(*Enter THALIA, dressed as Hamlet, and MELPOMENE, dressed as Ophelia.*)

Tha. To be, or not to be?

Mel. Well, ef yo' has any dubiousness on dat question, Sis Thalia Deborah, I'll jes settle it, right now! It's not to be, dat you does any ob yo' ol' Hamlet silly-queers, to bodder dis company, what I has been asked to subjugate wid a taste ob de regenrit drama!

Tha. Regenrit fiddlestick! Yo' do Feelers, yo' ol' loony jackass in a jute wig, a-sowin' cabbages!

(*The players can continue a scene, ad. lib., in which each tries to do her scene, ending in a free fight, which is interrupted by the sound of drums and trumpets outside.*)

Chloe. Praise de Lawd, here's de regular army; an' now we'll have peace!

(*Enter MRS. COL. CRACKEM, in full uniform, followed by the Shucktown Guards.*)

Mrs. C. Who's outragin' de peaces?

In Aunt Chloe's Cabin

Chloe. O, Mis' Colonel, ma'm, dese ladies has had a triflin' disconnection.

Col. C. Carry em both out, an' cool 'em under de pump! We must an' will have peace!

(THA. and MEL. are dragged off.)

Fudge. Mrs. Colonel, mam, what was dem respirin' strains we heard, as yo' was a-marchin' on?

Col. C. Dem strains, mam, was de natural hymn ob de Shucktown Guards; an' every Shucktonian wuf de name, mam, mus' learn to join in de chorus!

Editor E. Sing on, mam, an' we'll coruscate!

Chloe. Yaas; an' when it's did, we'll done lead de attack on dat possum!

(COL. C. and the guards sing the following song, to a lively "coon" march, making appropriate movements with the brooms and hoes with which they are armed.)

SONG.

When de men am off, a-servin' ob a gun,
An' a-marchin' an' a-sailin', day an' night,
Den am time fo' de ladies ob color done begun
Jes' to terin fo' a han' in de fight!

(Chorus.)

Den shoulder yo' hoe, an' yo' ol corn broom,
When yo' hear de cunnel holler;
Bang! bang! say de drum, now niggers, make room
Fo' de march ob de ladies ob color!

We've hoed in de fields till our arms is moughty strong,
And we'll hab de won'dring worl' to know
Dat dare don't no nigger do de ol' flag wrong,
While de women kin handle a hoe!

In Aunt Chloe's Cabin

(*Chorus.*)

Den shoulder yo' hoe, etc.

We've swep' de flo so tidy an' so well,

Till de dust flew off'n de broom ;

An' we'll sweep all foes from Manila into —

(*A violent bang on the bass drum.*)

Wid de udder end of de broom !

(*Chorus.*)

Den shoulder yo' hoe, etc.

(*At the conclusion of the song, at the gestured invitation of AUNT CHLOE, the guests make a mad rush for the possum.*)

CURTAIN.

THE STORY OF A
FAMOUS WEDDING
An *Outline* SKETCH for MUSIC
and DANCING

by EVELYN GREENLEAF SUTHERLAND

(Originally produced at the *Boston Theatre* in connection
with the Pageant *Our New England*, April 10, 1899)

THE STORY OF A FAMOUS WEDDING CHARACTERS

BENNING WENTWORTH *Governor of the Colony of New
Hampshire.* Originally played by
CLARENCE BENEDICT

LORD HARRY HUNTERS

LORD MERRINGTON

REV. ARTHUR BROWN

JOTHAM

JACK WRIGHTMORE

MARTHA HILTON *The Governor's Assistant House-
keeper.* Originally played by Mrs.
HELEN ADELAIDE SHAW

LADY PARROTTE

MISTRESS STAVERS

SALLY

THE TIME IS 1760

THE SCENE IS THE DRAWING-ROOM OF GOVERNOR WENTWORTH, AT
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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The Story of a Famous Wedding

SCENE. — *The drawing-room of GOVERNOR WENTWORTH'S mansion at Newcastle, New Hampshire. The period is 1760 ; the furniture is antique and rich ; there is a spinet, and the room is lighted by candles in candelabra and sconces. There are flowers and all possible signs of festivity. As the curtain rises, there is a burst of laughter from the next room, and clinking of glasses. JOTHAM and SALLY are arranging a coffee-tray on a table.*

Jotham. Fine doings be toward, Mistress Sally ! There be no less two-and-forty coaches of the nobility and gentry — ay, and 'tis arms all the world knows they bears on their panels — that wait without, in our stable-yard !

Sally. An' why not ? If folk cannot honor their rightful Governor, under the King, God bless him ! when 'tis that Governor's birthday, what do they read their prayer-books for ?

Jotham. Mebbe it's a bigger day yet than the Governor's birthday, Sally, lass !

Sally. A bigger day ? What could make it a bigger day ? What addled egg be your wits a sittin' on now, Jotham ?

Jotham. Addled egg, is it ? Then set you on your own ideas till they hatch the devil, for all I'll tell a saucy jade the biggest seeing New Hampshire e'er saw !

Sally. A real seeing ? Nay, Jotham, dear Jotham, I

The Story of a Famous Wedding

ne'er meant to jape ye! I was but grunted, Jotham, that ye danced with that pernicious Martha so many times at the servants' ball, last night, an' with me too scanty! When the finest man in the house flouts one, Jotham, a poor weak woman may e'en turn shrew!

Jotham (deeply flattered). Well, lass, when many seek a man, he cannot always be with the one! An' would ye really know the seeing I saw yon i' the kitchen? What say ye to a wedding-cake? Ay! No less than a true wedding-cake; with silver atop, and white frost-sweet, too, as thick as — as thick as —

(Enter MARTHA.)

Martha. As thick as the head of an old gossip that will draw a cudgel on his crown, by keeping his master's guests waiting for their coffee! Jump at your work, man!

Jotham. Well, of all the wasp-tongued wenches!

(Enter MISTRESS STAVERS.)

Sally (to STAVERS). And of all the grand-aièred wenches! 'Tis as if she were housekeeper over us all, an' not a serving lass one wi' us, an' no better!

Mistress S. Ay, 'tis ever the same sauce-pate as when she spilt the town pump's water from her swing pail over the bare legs of her, an' —

Martha. Oh, Mistress Stavers! That ever you should use such indelicacies in a gentleman's drawing-room, and that gentleman the Governor!

Mistress S. Out upon your japing! So you japed in the days I was inn-mistress o' the Earl o' Halifax; and when I would have called from my tavern door to

The Story of a Famous Wedding

teach you manners, "No matter how I look, madame!" says you, "I yet shall ride in my own carriage!"

Martha. And when I do, dame dearest, it is you shall loll on the seat to face me!

Sally. Mayhap 'tis for her the wedding-cake's baked below! Mayhap she weds to-night wi' — who's grand enough? Lord! Happen she weds wi' the Governor! (*Titters.*)

Martha. An' if I do, wench, you shall stoop to pick up my dropped handkerchief, and court'sy low, with a "By your leave, my lady!"

Jotham. Ho! ho! ho! (*Raptures of laughter.*)

Sally. Ay, all this shall be, an' no mistake, when crows hatch swans, an' she marries the Governor! By your leave, my lady!

(*With an ironical courtesy.* JOTHAM laughs again. *They go out.*)

Mistress S. Haste ye now an' put that pretty touch of thine on the flowers and fairings, that all be as the Governor likes when presently he comes in from his dinner. 'Tis a touch that sets all it touches a-blossoming, lass, runagate though ye were ever!

Martha. In all my runnings have I e'er run past the door of thy good heart, dear dame, and so home, over its threshold? Have I?

Mistress S. (*with an embrace.*) Ay, well have you that, and long ago; and well do you know the same, Maid Mischief!

Martha. Then lay thy kind hand on my head, — thus — motherwise, — and say, "God send thee a clear road, and courage to tread it, head up and eyes forward!"

The Story of a Famous Wedding

Mistress S. (hand on MARTHA'S head). What's this new folly?

Martha. Nay, say it, though but in a kiss! Quick! I hear movement! The grand folk are here!

Mistress S. (kissing her). Have thine own sort of blessing, madcap! There, thou hast pushed my cap all awry! Serve them till I come! (*Bustles out.*)

Martha. "Mine own sort of blessing!" Ah! Will mine own choice be a blessing or a ban? How stale tastes a game that is won!

(*Enter JACK WRIGHTMORE.*)

Martha. Jack! Ah! What mad sea-sending's here, Jack?

Jack. The sea hath sent a true-lover to his own, Martha! Come away from all their fripperies and wisp-lights! I — I dare not kiss thee here, and how my heart aches for it!

Martha. Thou'lt kiss me nevermore, Jack, lad, in light or dark. I had writ to tell thee — thy ship was not due home this month and more.

Jack. Thou'lt kiss wi' me no more? Martha! Martha! Art mad, lass?

Martha. Nay, 'tis life that's mad, I think. I never gave thee more than hope of promise. There never will be more — hush! Go thy ways, quick! I must serve them that come! To-morrow they will serve me! Wait but an hour, and thou shalt hear my riddle read. There! I'm sorry for thee, Jack, good heart! I'm sorry! But lad's love's quick outburnt! There are eyes as bright in other harbors! Go!

Jack. It's but an ill dream, lass! Sure it's but an ill dream!

The Story of a Famous Wedding

(*He gropes his way blindly out, as SIR HARRY HUNTERS and LORD MERRINGTON come in. The other guests follow, by groups and pairs; they stroll about the rooms, examining the flowers and decorations. The gentlemen serve the ladies to coffee.*)

Hunters (*watching JACK'S departure through his lorgnette*). 'Fore Gad, what strange sea-beast is that, I wonder?

Martha. One of the sort, my lord, that risks his life on the sea, that fine gentlemen may dawdle on shore in idle safety!

Lord M. (*laughing*). Well shot, pretty one! 'Fore heaven's that was a neat hit, Harry!

Hunters. She's damnably pert!

Lord M. She's damnably pretty!

Hunters. There's something in the air of this raw new country that kills out respect for one's betters! I'll have this wench sent about her business, or I've lost my hold on my uncle the Governor!

(*They go up stage.*)

Lady Parrotte (*coming down stage, with the REV. ARTHUR BROWN*). A charming party — yes — yes — a charming party, on my word! But how sad that a mansion like this should lack a mistress!

Brown. Sad indeed! If the Governor would but take a wife!

Lady P. Some lady of years, experience, and discretion!

Brown. Nay! Let age warm itself at the fire of youth, say I! What joy is in an old woman if a man himself be in years?

The Story of a Famous Wedding

Lady P. How dare you, sir! What sentiments from a churchman!

(They go up stage, he apologizing and she ruffling herself in anger.)

(Enter GOV. WENTWORTH.)

Lady P. Ah, Governor! Grant that I lend you my arm to your chair!

(As she starts to officiously lend him aid, she steps on his swathed and gouty foot. He gives a bovine bellow of pain and rage. General consternation.)

Gov. W. Will somebody lift that two hundred pounds of damned old woman off my toe?

(MARTHA comes forward; LADY P. is led up stage in tears.)

Martha. Gently, sir, — now a little to the right — that is well?

(She deftly seats the GOVERNOR in his great chair.)

Gov. W. You are a good lass, Martha, — a good lass! You've most of the sound sense in the colony!

(She arranges his footstool.)

Lady P. Such an example for the Governor of a colony to set! A widower — and the wench isn't a day over two-and-twenty! No self-respecting widower ever employed a maid-servant unless she squinted! A double squint — nothing else need call itself truly moral!

Gov. W. Where's my nephew? Harry, lad!

Hunters. I'm here, uncle. What is it your pleasure to want?

Gov. W. Give us that song, lad, that I praised the other day at the hunt breakfast! Nay, not the one

The Story of a Famous Wedding

about the mare — 'tis a devilish fine song, too, that song, but not with ladies! The one with the toast in it!

Hunters. Really, uncle, I am not sure that my voice —

Gov. W. To the devil with your voice, sir! Who said anything of your voice? I asked for the song!

Hunters. At your pleasure, uncle.

(*HUNTERS sings "Here's to the Maiden of Bashful Sixteen," with the guests joining in the chorus.*)

Gov. W. Guests and friends, you have toasted the lass of sixteen! Now I ask you to toast, and a cheer with it, the lass of two-and-twenty, whom to-night sees sealed my wife.

(*Immense sensation; exclamations of guests, rising through the general confused murmur, "His wife!" "The Governor marries!" etc., ad lib.*)

Lady P. He takes a wife! Ah, my beating heart!

Gov. W. Ay, friends. The feast is a feast still; but now it feasts a wedding! To-night is my birth-night; it is also my wedding-night; and you (*turning to the REV. ARTHUR BROWN, who is standing near him*) shall marry me!

Lady P. (who is standing near the REV. A.). I? (*In a hysterical scream of joy. She is hustled into the background.*)

Rev. A. This — this unexpected — this —

Gov. W. Great powers, man! It is I who am to be married, and not you!

Rev. A. But, your Excellency, — the bride —

Gov. W. (taking MARTHA'S hand). Is here. The best lass in the colony. And from to-night to be its greatest lady!

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(A second and yet more profound sensation. The amazed guests endeavor to conceal their feelings of dismay.)

Rev. A. (stammering). But — but — but —

Gov. W. But!! But!! Is the man a goat or a parson? Am I Governor or am I not? If I am Governor, by the Lord! you had best marry me before I —

Rev. A. At once, your Excellency. If you will take your place.

(The GOVERNOR and MARTHA take their places before the PARSON. The face of JACK is seen peering in over the heads of the servants, who crowd at the doors, back. He dashes his hand across his eyes, with a despairing gesture, and disappears.)

Lady P. (while the marriage is going on in dumb show.) Did I not say it? I know what comes of a maid-servant without a squint!

Lord M. (to HUNTERS). If you have not lost all hold with your uncle, Harry, lad, have him send the wench away! *(Laughs.)*

Hunters. And to see my heritage being vowed away! And I fathoms deep with the Jews! Damnation!

Rev. A. Man and wife. And whom God hath joined together let not man put asunder.

(He congratulates the GOVERNOR and MARTHA. The guests approach with congratulations. At the conclusion of the ceremony MARTHA takes off her servant's cap, drops it on the floor, and lightly sets her foot on it. She takes a rose from her breast and fastens it in her hair. All the men in congratulating her kiss her hand,

The Story of a Famous Wedding

except SIR HARRY, who merely bows over it. GOV. WENTWORTH stamps, imperiously, ordering him to kiss her hand. He does so.)

Martha (to herself). He has stood stanch to his word. A brave heart. That's something.

Lady P. (congratulating). And I trust your ladyship may long be spared to squint — I beg — I beg —
(She is hustled away.)

Gov. W. I may not tread a measure with my Lady Wentworth, but may I ask you to be my deputy, my lord? *(To MERRINGTON.)*

Lord M. The first dance with Lady Wentworth? This is honor indeed!

(He leads MARTHA out for the dance. As she passes near the doors, back, she kisses her hand gayly to MISTRESS STAVERS. As she takes her place at the head of the dance, she drops her handkerchief. She motions SALLY to pick up her handkerchief. The girl, in a dazed sort of way, obeys. She does not courtesay as she does so. The GOVERNOR, noticing, roars out.)

Gov. W. Wench, be these your manners to my Lady Wentworth?

(SALLY goes up, courtesies, and murmurs, "By your leave, my lady!")

Fotham (in doorway). If the wench were not Lady Wentworth I'd take oath she was the devil!

(The music strikes up. As MARTHA begins the first figure of this dance, MISTRESS STAVERS in the doorway murmurs between a laugh and a sob, "Ah, Pat! sweet madcap, thou hast kept thy word!" The dance goes on. At its conclusion the curtain falls.)

CURTAIN.

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